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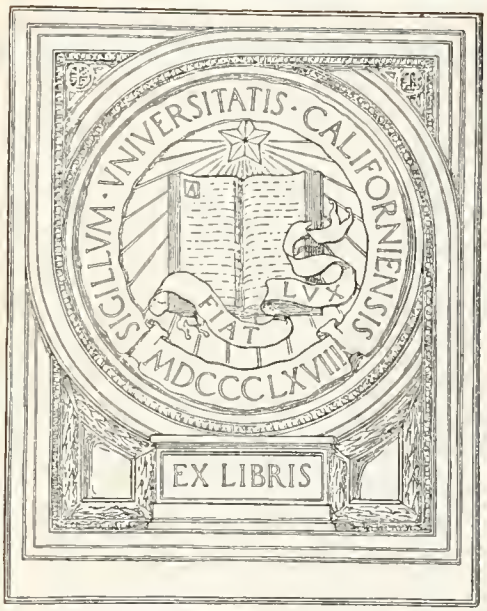
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The Message of the Dove.

(Bland, (Mrs. Edith Chesbrit)

G. P. Dutton & Company
New York.

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The Message of the Dove.

And the dove
came in to him
in the evening. and, lo, in her
mouth was an olive leaf
pluckt off: so Noah knew
that the waters were abated
from off the earth.

E. P. Dutton & Company
New York.

The Message of the Dove

by E. Nesbit.

Last night the angry sun dropped down
Like a ball of fire in the sea,
And the sullen water heaved and moaned
'Neath the weight of the storm to be.

And, before the after-light was gone,
The wind began to roar.
God help the men at sea, to-night,
God help the wives on shore!

One wife sat lone in her cottage room,
And her heart was sick with fear,
"'Tis Easter Eve, and on Easter Day
He promised that he'd be here.

'Please God,' he said, 'we'll be safe at home
By the blessed Easter Day.'
Oh, how can I praise if he does not come,
For my lips can only pray?"

Black, black grew the night,
and the gleaming spray
Hissed over the pebbly shore
The wind caught it up
in its evil grasp
To fling at the cottage door

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Warm-curtained the window,
and on the wall
The lamp light and fire-light play;
The cottage would be a pleasant place
If he were not away.

The wife cowered down in the firelight glow,
Her head upon her knee:
"O Christ, have pity on us to-night,
And bring back my man to me!"

The wind went shrieking about the house,
And fain would an entrance win,
But door and window were barred and fast,
And would not let it in.

A rush - a blast - for the wind has won,
It has thrust the shutter aside,
The lamp leaps up - and dies on a flash,
And the ashes are scattered wide

And the wife sits on by the bare hearthstone
And the wind is lord of the place,
It lays its hands on her loosened hair,
And smites on her pallid face.

The darkness crept to her inmost heart
Faith's light was darkened too
Is it Love's hand then that directs the rush,
And the deeds that the storm winds do?

Is it mercy that rides on the wings of doom,
Is it Light takes my light from me,
Is it Life that brings him a cruel death
And worse than death to me?"

Hark!—in through the window a rush of wings,
Had an angel been sent to save?
Would her soul go up from the wind-swept home,
And his from the wind-swept wave?

The wings still fluttered, and nearer came,
Till a soft plume her cheek caressed,
She put up her hands—'twas a stray soft bird
She caught and held to her breast.

A stray, lost pigeon, wearied with flight
In the stress of the stormy air,
The tempest had blown to her human heart,
And found it a shelter there.

The bird found shelter, and lighted peace
In the heart where it rested thus:
"If God will care for a bird like this,
I trust Him – He cares for us."

Poor bird, in the storm of death and wind,
Did some hand stretch out to thee,
To bring thee safe thro' the maddened skies
On a message of peace to me?

I trust Him now – He is strong to save –
He is mighty to choose and see,
And whatever He will for His child, I know
He does what is best for me.

As o'er dark waters, dark years ago,
A dove to the ark brought peace,–
So God has sent her this white dove now
To bid all her doubtings cease

"Thy will, not mine, I can trust," she said.
And she held the white dove fast
That had passed through the storm, as her soul had done,
And had anchored in peace at last

And she knelt and prayed – "If it be Thy will,
O Mighty, on sea and shore
As the wings of Thy dove guide the boat's white wings,
And bring him safe home once more."

And the storm raved on; when, at last, it slept,
Worn out with the night of doom,
Sleep had come after the night of tears,
In the little cottage room.

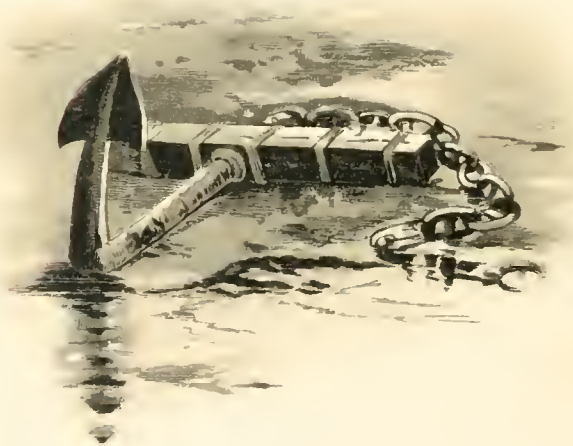
And the wind grown kind blew out of the sky
The clouds it had gathered there;
And the sun rose up on a blue, blue sea,
And a heaven of clear sweet air.

It played on the masts and the cordage brown
Of a boat in the harbour bay,
Which rose and rocked with the water's breast
On that happy Easter day.

And what had guided the white warm bird,
And what led the ship that night?
The Lord of the storm and the sun had led,
And all that He does is right.

Ah, Friend! when life's darkness darkens more
In the crash of the storm-wind's strife,
There's a spirit of peace who comes in and breathe-
The joy of a risen life.

And your hopes renounced and your dear dead dreams
Whose loss left your life forlorn,
He will raise them all from the dust again
On His Heavenly Easter morn.



Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

Consider the lilies how they grow they toil not, they spin not, and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these

If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

The End.

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